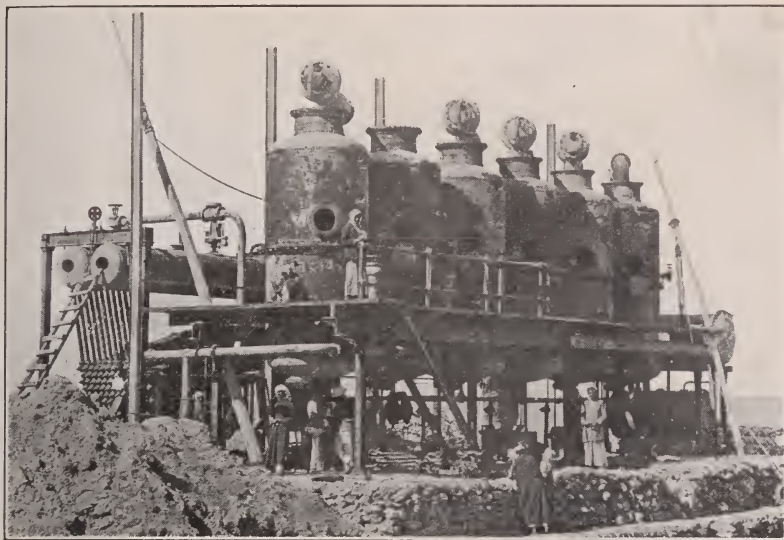


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Neglected Arabia



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This water distillery, recently erected by the British at Kuwait, has a capacity of 450 tons of water a day and is twice the size of the next largest one in the world. It will supply Kuwait with fresh water, which hitherto has been brought sixty miles by boat.

NEGLECTED ARABIA

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Neglected Arabia

Missionary News and Letters

Published Quarterly by

THE ARABIAN MISSION

The President of the Board of Foreign Missions

REV. HENRY EVERTSON COBB, D.D



At the first meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions following upon General Synod the usual organization for the year takes place. At the meeting in June of this year the unusual responsibility rested upon the Board of providing for the vacancy in the office of President owing to the death of Rev. Dr. John G. Fagg on May 3rd. By the unanimous choice of a large membership of the Board in attendance the Rev. Henry Evertson Cobb, D.D., becomes the President of the Board.

Dr. Cobb has been a member of the Board for the last twelve years, during which time he has taken an active part in its deliberations. Through his deep interest in and earnest advocacy of the foreign missionary work of our Church he has led the West End Collegiate Church, of which he is the Minister, into generous support of the work of the Board. This Church is maintaining several missionaries laboring at home and on the foreign field and has contributed especially to the large medical work carried on by the Amoy Mission.

Furthermore, Dr. Cobb bears a name that has long been identified with the missionary interests of the Reformed Church. His grandfather, Sanford Cobb, Esq., one of New York's active business men through many years, was a member of the Board for twenty-two years until his death. His uncle, the Rev. Henry N. Cobb, D.D., as is known to all, was Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions for nearly thirty years. Dr. Cobb, therefore, worthily followed a worthy succession, and the Board of Foreign Missions anticipates continued activity and prosperity with him as its President.

Why the Holy War Failed

REV. JOHN VAN ESS, Busrah, Mesopotamia



REV. JOHN VAN ESS

With the cries of the massacred Armenians still in our ears can we say that the holy war failed? The massacre of the Armenians, however, was not the result of the holy war, but was entirely a politico-military measure conceived by the clique at Constantinople and prompted, first, by the fact that Armenians, with their recognized anti-Turkish sentiments, constituted a military menace on the Caucasus frontier, and second, by the vision of Pan Turanianism, which Enver, Talat, Jawid and others cherished. The wholesale slaughter or deportation of the leading Arabs of Damascus and in fact of all Syria

bears out the latter contention. It is not my purpose here to discuss the jihad as such, its history and the conditions which make it incumbent, but only to point out why the call failed to produce the desired result in Arabia, where all conditions favored its success. *A fortiori*, the same reasons hold for all Moslem lands. The call issued from the proper source and was couched in terms calculated to influence and inflame all minds, especially the lower types. For days and days and far into the night I could hear the shrieks of the multitude as the mullahs preached the jihad from the balcony of the Turkish barracks. One of them, more effective than the rest, wore a huge green turban, sign of sacred blood and lineage, and day after day would work himself up into a frenzy and then as a grand climax would seize his turban, spit on it and fling it far out among the seething mass of humanity, shouting "Thus will the infidels do to the religion of the holy prophet." And the maddened crowds would seize the turban and kiss it and shriek and foam at the mouth—and go home, to recuperate for the next performance. Every effort was made to produce the desired effect on the masses, every impulse was appealed to, every argument used and the result was a flash in the pan. I can conceive of no other circumstances more favourable. Leading Mohammedans, sensing our feelings of amusement at the failure, would try to explain that the conditions did not warrant a jihad, as, for example, that Islam as such was not threatened, and that Islamic territory was in no danger of violation. But with the Christian infidel at the gates of Constantinople and Islamic territory being taken mile by mile in Mesopotamia, with Islam on the defensive everywhere and the consciousness that with the coming of Christian flags would come a real danger of Christian propaganda, conditions were surely ripe. All these conditions were pointed out by the haranguing mullahs, and yet the masses simply failed to respond. The reasons were, I think, the following:

1. Islam has become too materialistic to respond to a high spiritual call. Only once in the life of Islam has she reached that height. The effort of the Wahabis in Nejd in the early nineteenth century were an abortion, except locally. The opportunism of Mohammed himself has entered into the very fibre of the Mohammedan, and the promise of high prices for grain, sheep and dates when the British should arrive filled the whole horizon of the Mesopotamia Arabs at least. Surely, if anywhere, here was sacred soil—sacred to the memory of Ali, Hassan, Hussein, Abbas and other worthies who themselves had trod this sacred soil. Here were fought battles that live in Islamic history, here Islam under the Abbasides reached its high-water mark of culture. And yet I know a Turkish colonel who, even while he stood beside the preaching mullah had in his house great quantities of rice, stolen from his soldiers' rations, and committed to a native broker for sale when the prices should rise under the stress of famine and the blockade.

2. Islam lacks the courage of the initiative. True enough, Moslems are missionaries for their faith everywhere, but it is not the activity of initiative but the momentum of habit, or rather the result of their testimony, which, be it said, is the strong point of their faith, and one by which we might do well to profit. Save in Central Africa, Islam is

on the defensive—placed so by Christian missions—and in Arabia we hear everywhere from Moslem lips, “Each according to his faith—and Allah knows.” The Germans, however, keenly discerning this lack of initiative, tried to supply the same by organizing massacres with the hope of whetting the Moslem taste for blood. I have it on direct and absolute authority that in Bushire the German Consul-General already had slated for massacre European men and women even while he dined at their table, and after his arrest, when asked how he could thus betray human confidence, said: “When my government orders, I am but a machine.”

The Englishmen who were interned at Bagdad and were sent across country and later released, told me personally of having seen German officers with “Holy War” inscribed on their military caps.

3. A third reason for the failure of Jihad was undoubtedly fear of the oncoming Christian, Shades of Mohammed! And yet I know that one whole evening a large gathering of leading Moslems in Ashar, a suburb of Busrah, discussed the advisability of enlisting in the Jihad, and the argument that dissuaded them was the severe punishment that would be meted out by the British when they should arrive.

4. Another and to my mind the most gratifying reason was the feeling of fraternity between Moslems and Christians. No missionaries openly, even in the Hamidian regime, proclaimed our love for the Moslem but our abhorrence for Islam. We were made objects of scurrilous editorials in the native press, of violent fetwas by leading ulema. Yet when the dark days came, the girls’ school was closed, not because there were no girls, but because every foot of the mile which my wife travelled daily to the school was fraught with danger from flying bullets. Three of our evangelists were excused from military service because they were “readers” in the church, which everybody knew existed to preach the Gospel to Moslems. Every day the hospital was full and the clinics were crowded. And during the reign of terror after the Turks had evacuated the city and before the British came in, Arabs even brought us loot as a present!

5. Deep down in the hearts of Moslems is the conviction that the “last days” have come and that the crescent is waning. Did not Mohammed himself say, “This (my) religion began as a strange thing and shall return and become a strange thing even as it began.” They feel, even though they do not in so many words understand, the inevitability of victory on the part of Him who said, “I have overcome the world.”

The Changing Order in Kuweit

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY



MR. CALVERLEY MOUNTED ON A CAMEL

Our return to Kuweit was marked by no delay until we reached the Persian Gulf. We had transshipped at Hongkong with only two days between boats. At Bombay we stayed three days and then left on the first boat to Busrah, believing it would be more possible to reach Kuweit from there than from Bombay. At any rate it would be better to spend the time of waiting with our other missionaries in the Gulf than in a hotel in Bombay. After arriving at Busrah for two weeks we tried to get a passage to Kuweit. It seemed that it was the one place in the Gulf that was out of communication with the other ports. Mr. Dykstra, who came to Kuweit twice to strengthen the force in the station, on both occasions had to return to Bahrein on a *boom*, or small

sailing vessel. He says he feels more or less like an old salt now, especially after eating salted fish for five days. We had the prospect of going from Busrah to Kuwait on a similar sailing craft, but on account of the ladies and children we were unwilling to consider it until it would be certain that nothing else was possible.



ENTRANCE TO OUR HOSPITAL AT BUSRAH

The Rev. John Van Ess, who has cordial relations with several of the military officials in Busrah, suggested that since we were a non-combatant party, consisting of a clergyman, a woman-doctor, three children and a hospital nurse, we might be allowed to reach our destination on one of the hospital ships that occasionally went to Kuwait. The request was put before the chief military authority and refused, since: "None but invalids and nurses are allowed on board hospital ships." The incident indicates that the officials are guided by the international regulations in the strictest fashion. We finally secured permission to travel by favor on one of the small government tugs of the transport service that was going to Kuwait.

The trip in the tug down the sixty miles of the Arab River was a regular picnic, but when on the second day we reached the open sea a strong wind gave us all, except the baby, the worst twelve hours of

sea-sickness we have ever endured. The tug's captain decided that it would be suicide to attempt to steam through the storm with such a small boat, so he anchored on the mud-bar at the mouth of the river. Fortunately the next day was quiet and we reached Kuwait shortly after noon. It was a welcome sight after our journey of almost three months and our absence of two years.

We were glad to see again Dr. and Mrs. Mylrea and Miss Schafheitlin, who have been carrying on their own work and ours so splendidly during our furlough. They had even cleaned the new house for us and had also found us the household help we needed without knowing definitely what that need would be.

We could have wished that the splendid welcome we received from a small circle of Arab friends had been more general, although I would not have liked all of them to be as effusive as one young Arab who kissed me on the neck before I could prevent it. We found that many who before had greeted us with scowls now gave us smiles and seemed to consider that we belonged to the town.

We were delighted on first sight with the new residence that so many in America have had a share in providing for us. As we have lived in it our pleasure in its comforts and conveniences increases. Its cement floors, its doors and windows with glass in them, its closets and fire-places—well, it doesn't need plumbing and electricity for us to consider it most comfortable and convenient. We have found full use for its six rooms. One of them has practically become a school-room, for I have English classes in it six afternoons and five evenings a week, and some mornings also. Indeed, yesterday morning I had an advanced class in typewriting in the usual room, which has been called the office, and at the same time was giving another lesson in the drawing room. But usually this parlor is the reception room for the Arab women who come. So there is no doubt about the usefulness of our new home both for our work and our living. The children find the verandahs splendid playgrounds when the sun is too hot for them to be outside.

We found that quite a number of changes had taken place in Kuwait during our furlough. For one thing there is a new flag on the staff at the sheikh's palace. The star and crescent of Islam, as Sheikh Mubarak used to describe it, or of Turkey, as the Ottoman officials claimed, is replaced by a red flag with the simple word, "Kuweit," in white, on it. This indication of independence is a part of the separation of nearly all Arabia from Turkish claim or authority. In Mecca the new king of the Hajaz has issued his own stamp, which is the first purely Arabian stamp the country has had. Unlike the new Egyptian and Turkish stamps, it is entirely in Arabic and is without any sort of a picture on it, perhaps to show its absolute aloofness from European influence. But, curiously enough, the cancelling stamp of the Meccan post-office does have a European lettering on it! Needless to say the

stamps were not printed in Arabia, although the time may soon come when they will be, for Mecca itself has its own newspaper now. This paper is called "Al Qiblah," the Focus, referring to Mecca as the focal point of the Moslem world at the times of worship.

It is a point to be noted that while, beside the Sherif of Mecca, nearly all the other Arabian chieftains have broken away from the Turks, not all their peoples have approved their course. This is due to their right belief that the fall of Turkey entails the weakening of Islam. So long, however, as their rulers move slowly, although steadily, to an independence of position, their people will follow them. As the process of time shows that Turkey can disappear without carrying with it the disappearance of all their religious customs, the people will welcome more readily their political leader's more progressive viewpoint.



THE NEW MECCAN POSTAGE STAMP

NOTE THE DATE OF THE CANCELLING STAMP,

DECEMBER 16, 1916.

Another new thing we found in Kuwait is its telegraphic connection with Busrah, and so with the outside world. The *London Times* in a recent number stated that the rate of a telegram to Kuwait was two shillings three pence a word. The rate to Busrah is one anna, or two cents. The advent of the telegraph has provided our school with another proof of its value since it increases the demand for a knowledge of English. This fact is frequently brought to the attention of those who are hostile to our work.

Another improvement in the way of communication with the rest of the world that Kuwait is to have is a railroad. With the Germans

in charge of the Bagdad Railway the line would never have been brought to Kuwait. But now there seems little doubt that the railroad that extends northward from Busrah will also be brought south to Kuwait. The Arabs, with their easy acceptance of modern advancement in which they have no hand, are more sure than the officials that the work will begin soon. I was amused at the way an Arab put it in a *mejlis* of one of the sheikhs. "There are three things Kuwait has needed," he said. "They are the *mail*, the *tail* (telegraph), and the *rail*. We now have the M and the T. All we need to get now is the R." It's all very easy.

A wireless station had also been planned for Kuwait, and the buildings to house it have been erected. But the telegraph seems to have sufficed and the wireless installation has not been put in. With the powerful station at Busrah so near another at Kuwait is obviously unnecessary. The buildings are now used as the residence of the British Political Agent. He intends to move all his offices there in the near future. As the buildings are over a mile beyond the western edge of the town where we are located, there will be increased traffic in our direction, making our location as favorable as the wisest foresight could have provided. It will be recalled in this connection that the site was chosen in prayer before ever our work was allowed to be begun here.

An improvement that Kuwait is soon to have is a water distillery. The plant is almost completed and soon Kuwait should have a water supply that will be independent of storms and sailing boats. There has always been a danger in Kuwait that a protracted storm at sea would prevent the boats that bring water from the Arab River, sixty miles away, from arriving in time to supply the town with the water it needs. Such scarcity has been frequent in the past and the distillery was planned to give Kuwait a security it never enjoyed before. The plant has a capacity of 450 tons of water a day and is twice the size of the next largest in the world. It is located on the sea-front, handy both for its raw material and its fuel, which will be oil brought in steamers from the oil-works at Abadan on the Arab River. Kuwait is a warm place in summer. That distillery is going to show us something new in temperatures. I am glad our house is nowhere near it. However, its constant and successful operation will be a great boon to the town. But unless something better than the present method of distribution is introduced, the cost of the water we drink will not be much reduced for us, since we will have to re-boil all that is brought to us in goat-skins, as we get it at present.

In addition to the changes and improvements above mentioned and far exceeding them in interest was the difference we noted in the size of the congregations at the Sunday services for Moslems. It did not seem like Kuwait at all, with the school-room literally packed with boys and young men, and the verandah outside crowded with black bundles of Moslem women. Seventy-five to a hundred people, all Moslems, and a dozen Christians of the mission community made a mar-

vellous sight for Kuwait. The gathering could be compared, but only in a feeble way, to a rescue mission service in a water-front community of Catholics, in regard both to the need of the Gospel message and the attitude toward it. The opportunity is one that inspires the keenest enthusiasm, and there is not the slightest uncertainty about the note that is sounded in response.

Kuweit had certainly advanced in many ways during the time of our furlough and had become a far more interesting field than ever before for the work to which we had returned.



ELIZABETH AND GRACE CALVERLEY ON THEIR WAY TO ARABIA. THEY ARE CERTAINLY FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS.

A Letter from Kuwait

Dear Gleaner Friends:

Kuwait, March 29, '17.

Yes, I am really writing "Kuwait" at the head of this letter. Furlough days are over and we are "on the field" once more. Sometimes I wonder if this can be the same place of which I used to tell my friends in America. The native house in which we used to live—I have not seen it since our return. Instead, we have our delightful, new six-roomed house, which so many of you helped to build. We are out on the edge of town, with the seashore in front of our house, and the wonderful ever-changing sea and sky as the view from our front veranda.

I used to tell you that Kuwait was a place in which you see "never a tree nor a patch of green." Since then I have made the acquaintance of the desert, which stretches unobstructed for miles beyond our house. Since the winter rains have ceased, a carpet of little green plants has sprung up all over the sand, and we can enjoy the freshness for several weeks until the sun scorches them at the beginning of the really hot weather.



THE NEWLY FINISHED RESIDENCE AT KUWAIT,
NOW OCCUPIED BY THE CALVERLEYS

The days of the tumble-down dispensary, with its pink calico curtain, have passed too. Instead, we are sharing with Dr. Mylrea the fine new hospital, with its splendid operating room and equipment. To-day the first shovelful of earth was turned in preparation for the building of the new woman's dispensary. We are a bit crowded for room in the hospital now, but when the new woman's quarters are finished, we shall be comfortable indeed!

The church services and school are still held in a native house in the middle of the town. In the school some of the finest young men and boys in the town are daily coming under Christian influence. On Sunday our Arabic service is attended by a great crowd of Moslems, from eighty to a hundred men, women and children, and this in spite of tremendous opposition to our work on the part of the more fanatical men of the town. We used to be elated if one or two Moslems came to hear the preaching.

Mrs. Mylrea and Miss Schafheitlin have made great numbers of new friends during the last two years. Many of the women in this

part of the town look upon me as a stranger, but they almost all know Mrs. Mylrea and Miss Schafheitlin. Day after day the crowd of women in the dispensary has been listening to the old, old story from the lips of the women missionaries. The Moslem assistant, who has been with us since those first days in Kuweit, has heard the Gospel hundreds and hundreds of times. A few days ago, after hearing a talk on the "fall" of Adam and Eve, she said to Miss Schafheitlin: "Just think, Khatoon, if Adam and Eve had not disobeyed God we should have had no sickness, no trouble, no death in this world. The things you tell us are very interesting, and the teaching is very good, but there is one mistake which every one of you makes. You say that the Prophet Jesus died, and that cannot be true. It could not be possible that God would let His enemies kill Him. He did not die; the Koran says He was taken up to Heaven alive, and God put on the Cross some one else who looked like Him to deceive His enemies. In that one thing you are mistaken."

And so the evil one seems to snatch away the seed we sow. But we shall continue to sow beside all waters, and in due season we *shall* reap if we faint not. By your prayers we shall not faint!

ELEANOR T. CALVERLEY. *The Mission Gleaner*.

As For Ishmael "I have heard Thee"

(Gen. 17:21)

NOTE. Concerning the following article Miss Gertrude Schafheitlin writes:

"We were very happy to read this little article about a Madina convert, which appeared in the Egypt General Mission News. As the readers of Neglected Arabia probably do not see this paper, I made a copy of it. *We are glad that one of our Bahrein colporteurs was used by Him in this conversion.*"

At one of our days of prayer last spring we were led to cry to God for Arabia, for Mecca, where Muhammad was born, and for Madina, where he lies buried, for the Arab in his darkness and need, and that the political changes taking place in Arabia might tend to the opening of doors there and the furtherance of the Gospel. "O that Ishmael might live before Thee!" was the desire of our hearts. We pleaded specially that as Mecca and Madina were fast closed to Christian effort, God would Himself raise up witnesses in these cities from amongst the inhabitants who would fearlessly confess Christ.

A few weeks ago the news came of an interesting convert, who had turned up at one of our stations. A wonderful story his of suffering for the sake of the Name, and deliverance from the hands of his enemies. "He has suffered more than any converts from Islam I have heard of, and if ever we can publish his story, you will agree that it is almost like a chapter out of the Acts of the Apostles." He is wonderfully bold in his confession of Christ, and fear does not seem to enter into his composition.

Well, this convert is *a native of Madina*. He was a pearl merchant, and went to Bahrein, on the Persian Gulf, to buy pearls at the fish-

eries, and there he found the Pearl of Great Price. The instrument in his conversion being another Arab convert, who used to come to our conferences at Zeitoun, and is now working as an evangelist with the Arabian Mission at Bahrein. The new convert returned to Madina to get his wife and family, but persecution broke out, and he only just escaped with his life. He had been sentenced to death, but his mother, who was loyal to him, provided him with money and helped him to get away. He turned up at our station quite destitute, and, although he has evidently been a man of good position, he is content to work as sweeper and door-keeper of the girls' school. Wherever he goes in the village he bears fearless testimony, and much opposition and persecution resulted. Many have been praying for him, and that the enemy is really alarmed is evident from the fact that our compound was broken into, and a determined attempt made to take his life. It was on a Sunday evening, when our workers were busy with a meeting for British soldiers, that the murderous attack was made, and when he was found he was lying on the ground in a terrible condition. His mouth had been filled with mud, there were marks of attempted strangling on his neck, and his ribs had been badly battered. When he was restored to consciousness, he said two men had attacked him; they have since been captured, and the government inspector is determined that nothing of the sort shall happen again. All through the affair this Arab convert has shown the most loving and forgiving spirit towards his persecutors.

Pray for him, that he may be kept for Jesus Christ; that wisdom may be given in all our dealings with him, that he may be filled with the Holy Ghost and become spiritual and able to stand against all the awful temptations that assail the convert from Islam. Pray, too, for Arabia and its need; that soon the doors may open, and that this man and many like him may enter in as ambassadors for Christ.—(*Egypt General Mission News*.)

Kuwait Medical Work, 1915-1916

DR. C. STANLEY G. MYLREA



DR. C. STANLEY G. MYLREA

Before proceeding to discuss the year's work it must be pointed out that the actual working year has been very materially bitten into by unavoidable delays and duties outside of medical work pure and simple. In the first place annual meeting at Bahrein delayed us several weeks, so that (owing to lack of steamer connections) we did not get back to Kuwait until December 14th—a clear loss of six weeks' time. Then in April I was again absent twelve days in connection with Dr. Chamberlain's visit. All through the year the building of the Kuwait second residence took up a great deal of my spare time, and the final plastering and finishing work of this house during the sum-

mer demanded all of my time, so much so that from July 18th on I closed down the regular routine of the hospital and attended only to urgent and emergency cases. Finally on September 24th I left for a vacation in India. The total time then in which the hospital routine was in full swing was only six and a half months, although, of course, some work was done by the assistants during the other five and a half months, in fact a good deal of work. Again it must not be forgotten that all the duties of the station, both evangelistic and educational devolved, upon the physician, with the exception of the early part of the year up to March 9th, when we had Mr. Dykstra with us and had the pleasure of his assistance at the Sunday services.

Taking all these things into consideration the returns show a distinct advance on last year.

The *in-patients in the hospital* numbered 58, of which 36 were Surgical, 13 were Eye and 9 were Medical. Between them they spent 820 days in the hospital, or an average stay of about 14 days per patient. This total of 58 is the same as last year. Several of these in-patients were from the best families in the town, and the Sheikh's household was represented on two occasions. An important Sheikh from Fao was also an in-patient for some weeks and went home cured and grateful, and has been a good friend of ours ever since.

Dispensary Work. On the Men's side 2,203 New Cases were treated and 796 on the Women's, with total treatments New Cases and Old Cases of 6,166 on the Men's side and 1,986 on the Women's, making a Grand Total of all Treatments on both sides of the hospital 8,152. These totals are only a trifle below last year's figures.

Visits. 120 were made to 40 different individuals.

Surgical Operations. 119 Surgical Operations were performed, exclusive of some 300 Tooth Extractions.

Fees. Fees show a slight increase over last year—the total being Rs.1710-10-6 an increase over last year of Rs.84-13. Of this total Rs.112-12-3 was contributed from the Women's side.

In connection with the subject of fees it should be mentioned that a fine horse, together with saddle and bridle, was presented to the doctor by Sheikh Naar, as were also a microscope and some surgical instruments formerly belonging to the opposition hospital here—a Moslem Institution, now defunct.

The New Ward to which I referred in my report last year as a possibility during 1916 has now materialized. It is a fine big room, which will easily accommodate eight beds and measures some 35 feet by 14 feet. It was made possible by the gift of Rs.1000 by Lt.-Col. W. G. Grey, and this sum, together with special gifts and G. L. M. A. S. grants, represents the cost of the building, altogether about Rs.1800.

The money given by the Viceroy last year has now been spent and the Operating Room is the richer by a first class clock and a 300 candle power lamp.

I think it is fair to say that the popularity of our medical work is steadily growing—the attitude of the people is ever more and more friendly and when I recently returned from my vacation in India I was surprised at the number of visitors who came to welcome me back.

The Evangelistic work of the Hospital has been kept up on the old, well-tried lines. Michael, the colporteur, has spent his mornings with the dispensary patients and has done good and faithful service. As last year, he still maintains that he sells more Scriptures in the hospital than anywhere else, by two to one, although he only spends half his time in the hospital.

During the year we have had on the hospital staff two men who professed an interest in Christianity. The first, who had come across country from Hebron, where he had deserted from the Turkish Army, made a great impression on the native brethren when he arrived in Kuwait. He had been in touch with a missionary in Hebron and had learned to know his Bible, both Old and New Testaments, fairly well, and was faithful and apparently keen in attending all religious exercises. He insisted that he had rejected Islam and was a Christian. He brought no letters or credentials of any kind from his former missionary friend, but I gathered from one of our men who knows Hebron that his statements were true. I did my best to get the man to earn his living and told him from the very start that I did not want to employ him and that his witness would be much more valuable if he accepted no financial assistance from us. However, he did not seem to be able to get anything to do, and later on I allowed him to work with the labourers on our house building operations. He did pretty well at this for a while, but a hot temper and an arrogant disposition made him speedily unpopular with his fellows. The native brethren were by this time, however, more impressed with his genuineness than ever—as one of them put it—“Ma lahu mutlub ebeden—He has no ulterior motive whatever,” and they began to put pressure on me to give him regular work. The horse referred to above had just been given to me, and as he knew a good deal about stable routine there seemed to be an opening for him in this direction. He did very well at this, and not long afterwards I extended his duties by taking him into the hospital as a probationer in the drug department, allowing him also to go to school one hour a day in the hope of his learning enough English to make him an efficient druggist. I had a weekly Bible Class for the hospital assistants and the man came regularly to this and took a keen interest in all the lessons. His bad temper now began to assert itself again—at this time he had been with us some three months—he quarreled with everybody and gossiped about our people in the bazaar with all sorts of chance acquaintances, without any regard to truth or circumstances. Later on he left our service, but came back penitent two days afterwards only to revert very soon to his same old ways. By this time the Native Brethren had almost lost faith in him as a possible member of our force, but I continued to hold on to him in the hope that he would eventually settle down. Once again he left our service, as he was convinced that the whole station was against him; I have not seen him since. The behaviour of the Native Brethren towards him and their patience in the face of his overbearing ways was splendid. In spite of his failure to fit in here I believe the man really was in earnest when he said he was a Christian—he was just an impossible type of man and perhaps a trifle

unsound mentally. In case any of my colleagues should meet him, I may mention that his name was Rafit.

The second candidate for Christianity was a man whose eyes we saved from inevitable destruction by our care of him in the hospital. He, too, was destitute, and as it suited me at the time I gave him employment, but when it suited him he left us and I find it hard to believe that he was ever in earnest religiously. There seems to be no doubt that the policy of employing "would-be" converts and inquirers is unsuccessful in most cases, and yet all of us know how almost impossible it is to leave them to stand alone.

May I close this report with a request. The Hospital is greatly in need of additional out-buildings—we need quarters for our assistants who cannot live in the town, which is a mile and a half away. Hospital assistants should live on the hospital premises so as to be always available. Heretofore they have managed to get along in one room, but they have both recently been married so that the present accommodation is quite insufficient. We also need a small room for the sweeper to live in—he, like the assistants, should live on the place. Finally we need a large store room for drugs and supplies—the present one being far too small. The sum of \$1,000 would put up all these additional rooms.

The Appointees for 1917 and their Message to the Church

At the meeting of farewell at General Synod in June the appointees for Arabia together with the other out-going missionaries stated their reason for going to the foreign field. This farewell message of each one as he was introduced to the Synod that evening follows. It is, in fact, their message to the whole church.

REV. HENRY A. BILKERT:

'Arabia needs my Christ. There are others who cannot go. I can go, therefore I must go; and, with your co-operation and in God's providence, I want to go.'

MRS. ANNA MONTEITH BILKERT:

"I am going to Arabia as the result of the prayers of my Father and Mother, and somehow to-night the privilege of going there and the great trust to me in going there seems greater than ever, and I can imagine myself, after a hard day in Arabia, being revived and made glad at the memory of this occasion. And I thank you that you thought it was worth while to bring us here."

MISS MARY C. VAN PELT:

"When Jesus stood and looked on the multitude, He said: 'What are you going to do with them?' Someone said: 'You have nothing!' And Andrew said: 'There is a lad here who has five loaves and two fishes.' And He said: 'Bring them to me.' And he brought them and then He blessed them and brake, and they were fed. Here is a girl. She has been a nurse. If He can take her life and bless it and use it—I will go because He sends me. There is not one of us who would dare to go one-hundredth of a step without the power of God. Will you help us by paying the price of power? The price of power is prayer."



Henry A. Bilkert
Kalamazoo, Mich.
Hope College, '14
New Brunswick and Western
Seminaries, '17



Mrs. Anna Monteith Bilkert
Kalamazoo, Mich.
Kalamazoo College, '15
Kennedy School of Missions, '16



Mary C. Van Pelt
Hillsboro, Ohio
Norton Memorial Infirmary



DR. H. G. VAN VLACK DRESSED AS AN ARAB

The Future in Arabia

An Address by H. G. VAN VLACK, M. D.

NOTE: Dr. Van Vlack has just been commissioned First Lieutenant in the Medical Reserve Corps of the United States Army.

Let me tell you how we celebrated the Fourth of July two years ago. The day was humid and the mercury hugged 112 and 115 degrees all day. No, it did not rain except for the perspiration that fell from us and from the trees in the morning. For there in the Persian Gulf one does not see rain from March to November. We Americans—eight counting the babies—decided to celebrate by having a picnic in the desert in the evening. At sundown we reached the chosen spot, a knoll, so as to catch any breeze hot or cool that might be caught out of doors. Near us was the shabby date-garden with an occasional scarlet pomegranate blossom to be seen among the trunks of the trees. Higher up were the young dates commencing to show their color of yellow or red below the dusty fronds forming the tops of the date trees. In the garden and about it were the huts of grass and date branches. From these came the odors of cooking and other odors not so pleasant. On the desert we saw countless bleaching bones of camels, donkeys, cows, and sheep, lying where they had been dragged from the city dead or to die. Then somehow we were glad that God had made the sun hot to dry up the offal that was uncared for, except that it was removed from under the former owner's nose. We were glad for the wild dogs that acted as scavengers. We were not glad for the mosquitoes that swarmed from every hole and damp place in the irrigated gardens, and which brought the fever under their tongues. We were not glad for the flies that competed with us, and often successfully, in the struggle for the food from our cloth. We were not glad that the children from the huts were illiterate, dirty, and ignorant of all moral and sanitary laws.

That night we thought of our homes in America and all that she had meant to us and to all the people in her charge. Someway we wanted to bring her influence more and more over into that neglected gulf and valley.

But the message that I was asked to bring you was on "Conditions in the East." The East of which I want to tell you is in the Arab country of the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia, of Moslems, yes, and polygamists, 2,000 years behind the times in the march of civilization. A people backward and unprogressive, but backward because they have been under the sway and domination of the unthinkable Turk. All progress, ambition, and almost their very souls have been crushed out of them. Still they are very democratic in their ideals. To-day the British Expeditionary Force "D" has occupied a large part of Mesopotamia. In the places where the Arab is in full control their government is tribal and paternal of the most primitive type.

What of the country? Is it worth developing? Do you know that the most valuable pearl fisheries of the world are those of the Persian Gulf? That the Mesopotamian valley is as rich if not richer than our Mississippi-Missouri valley? Mesopotamia was the site of the Garden of Eden, of Babylon, of Baghdad the Magnificent. To-day this valley of the Tigres and Euphrates rivers, called Mesopotamia, is almost unscratched. With irrigation it would again become "The Garden Spot of the Earth," and literally feed the world with its dates and grains. In it are nine known oil fields, only one of which has been tapped. From this area comes most and the finest of our dates. From Baghdad before the war there was shipped annually more than a million dollars' worth of wool and hides to the U. S. A. The mountains of Turkey, Persia, and Arabia have never been prospected, but from what little we do know we believe that they contain great wealth in minerals and precious stones.

Now this is their need. They need to be taught to rule and to help to develop their resources. The children need to be taught what real patriotism means, to be good Arabs, not American or English half-castes. They need to be taught values of moral living, sanitation, and the rights of neighbors. This means schools, boy scouts, playgrounds, civic pride, etc. They need to be guided in forming a government and in running it when it is once formed.

Does this affect us and how? Turkey is bound to lose control over these people if *we Allies* win this war and are true to our best traditions. They want a democracy and we are bound to give it to them in the best form that we can. I have tried to show you what a valuable country this is in its natural resources of men, soil, and minerals. England, which is occupying this country, will be pretty well exhausted in men and money by the time this war is over. So I will not be at all surprised if we in America are asked to take a hand in the development of the resources of Mesopotamia.



You say this is visionary—a dream? Let me tell you what I see in the future. I see the Shat-el-Arab, the River of the Arabs formed by the junction of the Tigres and Euphrates Rivers, teeming with laden merchant vessels instead of men-of-war at Busrah. River fighting vessels and transports I see changed into cargo boats to carry the commerce of the two rivers. Instead of cannon and munitions of war moving to the northward, I see produce of America and Europe taking their place. On the military railroads now there, no longer do I see machine guns and rifles, but I see American tractors, plows, seeders, binders and threshers. For, to-day the Arab still uses the crooked stick to plow with, he cuts his grain with a sickle and treads it out with horse, mule, donkey, or cow, exactly as it was done 2,000 years ago. I see the army of occupation turned into an army of development. I see irrigation dams and canals built, grain fields and gardens covering the now barren desert lands and battlefields. Thus will the sword be turned into a plowshare and the spear into a pruning hook.

Our American vanguard is already there. There are American schools, hospitals and licorice plants there and at work. But most of all, the people trust America and believe we are true and disinterested without intending any grab at their country; that we stand to succor the oppressed and give all a square deal. Horace Greeley in his day said: "Young man, go West." I say, "Young America keep your eye on the East. It calls for manhood and leadership just as truly as the West did in Greeley's day."

Missionary Personalia

The Rev. and Mrs. John Van Ess left Busrah March 25th and arrived in America June 23d. They spent some time travelling in India en route. They have spent the summer in northern Michigan while Mr. Van Ess has been speaking at some of the Mission Fests. He will be available this winter for the presentation of the work of the Arabian Mission in the churches.

The Rev. and Mrs. G. D. Van Peursem and their family, the Rev. G. J. Pennings and Miss J. A. Scardefield are returning to Arabia August 28th on the S.S. Inaba Maru from Seattle. Arrangements have also been made for the missionaries under appointment, Rev. and Mrs. Henry A. Bilkert and Miss Mary C. Van Pelt to sail on the same steamer, though it is feared that difficulties in the way of permits and passports may cause a slight postponement in the date of sailing.

The Persian Gulf, for the present, has been placed under the Government of India, and the regulations promulgated by that government with regard to the obtaining of permits before those engaged in missionary or educational work are allowed to enter the country, applies to the area of our work in Arabia as well as to India. These permits must be obtained from the Government of India and though application was made through the Embassy at Washington as early as March, at the date of writing these have not been received. The failure to have these permits in hand will necessitate a postponement of the date of sailing.

Dr. S. M. Zwemer, in accordance with previous arrangement, is now in China visiting the large centres of Mohammedan population and giving addresses at the summer missionary conferences. He is expecting to be back in Cairo about November 1st.

The Rev. and Mrs. Fred J. Barny and family have spent the summer in the Catskills. Mr. Barny contemplates doing some special work in the Arabic and Semetic languages during the coming autumn.

Miss Sarah L. Hosmon, M.D., expects to return to America on furlough in the spring of 1918. Dr. Hosman has remained on the field beyond her usual furlough period because of the depleted condition of the Mission staff.

Dr. H. G. Van Vlack has withdrawn from the Arabian work to take up service with the Army. He has been commissioned a First Lieutenant in the Medical Reserve Corps of the United States Army. It is hoped that he will take up his work again in Arabia after the present emergency has passed.

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